United Nations A/C.5/53/SR.45

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 45th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 17 December 1998, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Organization of work

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98-83745 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Organization of work

1. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda), speaking on a point of order, said that the Committee should concentrate on the one item still outstanding rather than take formal action on the items on which consensus already existed. Accordingly, the Committee should move to an informal meeting for that purpose.

2. **Mrs. Brennen-Haylock** (Bahamas) proposed that informal consultations should proceed in parallel with the formal meeting, since only a small number of representatives of groups would be involved in the consultations. Delegations not involved with the outstanding issue could proceed with the remainder of the Committee's work.

3. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) said that it would expedite the Committee's work to resolve the outstanding issue so that decisions could then be taken on all items at one time.

4. **Ms. Powles** (New Zealand) said that her delegation was willing to proceed as previously agreed and to go on with other issues so as to allow the Committee's work to continue in the most constructive manner.

5. **Mr. Kabir** (Bangladesh) said that it would be difficult for the Committee to conduct a formal meeting and informal consultations at the same time.

6. **Mrs. Brennen-Haylock** (Bahamas) said that the Committee must make the best use of its time. The informal consultations would involve only a small number of people.

7. **Mr. Skjonsberg** (Norway) said that his delegation supported the representatives of the Bahamas and New Zealand.

8. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to rule 116 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which limited the number of speakers on a motion for adjournment of debate.

9. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) said that delegations' views differed on how to spend the Committee's time usefully. Since consensus already existed on several items, it was more important to spend time on resolving the remaining outstanding issue rather than hearing explanations of position on matters on which there was already agreement. His delegation was surprised at the insistence on holding informal consultations at the same time as the formal meeting.

10. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) said that while his delegation was flexible, it felt that it would facilitate the issuance of documents for submission to the General Assembly if the Committee continued with its formal meeting.

11. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should take up the first six items listed in the *Journal* for that meeting and then meet informally.

12. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) said that his delegation had no preference for one item over any other; it would simply expedite the Committee's work to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the budget outline and then adopt all the draft resolutions at one sitting.

13. **The Chairman** said that it was important to submit reports as quickly as possible to the General Assembly, which was to adjourn that day. He noted that earlier in the session the Committee had taken action on the scale of assessments as a separate item.

14. **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland) supported the Chairman's suggestion.

15. **Ms. Incera** (Costa Rica) supported the position taken by the representative of Uganda.

16. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) appealed to the delegation of Uganda to agree to the holding of informal consultations in parallel to facilitate the Committee's work.

17. **The Chairman** said that the Committee might need to vote on the matter, but that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, no further speakers could take the floor on the question.

18. **Mr. Adawa** (Kenya) said that refusal to allow further speakers would constitute a violation of the rules of procedure. In any event no one had requested a vote. His delegation supported the position taken by the representative of Uganda, particularly since informal consultations would take only a few minutes. The Chairman was seeking to impose views on the Committee which were not acceptable to many delegations.

19. **The Chairman** said that the Committee was bound by rule 116 of the rules of procedure.

20. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** said that the Committee had not actually begun consideration of any item at the meeting. In the interest of saving time, she supported the representatives of Uganda and Kenya.

21. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would suspend its formal meeting to determine how to proceed.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.45 a.m.

22. **Mr. Thorne** (United Kingdom) proposed that the Committee should again suspend the formal meeting to allow for further informal consultations.

23. *It was so decided.*

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 12:10 p.m.

24. **Mrs. Brennen-Haylock** (Bahamas) reported that the atmosphere in the consultations regarding the budget outline had been productive, but that more time was needed to reach agreement.

25. **Mr. Yusuf** (United Republic of Tanzania) asked about the implications for the preparation of the programme budget if the Committee was unable to agree on a budget outline, and whether the Secretary-General could prepare a budget without a resolution from the Fifth Committee.

26. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria) recalled that, prior to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 41/213, programme budgets had been prepared without an outline, and that the adoption of that resolution had resolved a major crisis. Failure to agree on a budget outline would place the operations of the entire Organization at risk.

27. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that, in the absence of a budget outline, the Secretary-General would be guided by financial regulation 3.4 and would submit his proposed programme budget. Without a budget outline, however, there would be no contingency fund and therefore nothing to draw down on for programme budget implications for the biennium 2000–2001.

28. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in the absence of a budget outline, the status of General Assembly resolution 41/213 would be in jeopardy. As the chief administrative officer of the Organization, the Secretary-General was required under financial regulation 3.4 to propose a budget to the General Assembly based on his own judgement of what would be required to implement the mandates of the General Assembly. In his view, it was not yet the appropriate time to contemplate the consequences of such a situation.

29. **The Chairman** said that further consultations would be held on the programme budget outline.

The meeting was suspended at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/53/SR.45/Add.1

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the second part* of the 45th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 18 December 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 17: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(k) Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee (*continued*)

Agenda item 120: United Nations common system (*continued*)

Agenda item 135: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*)

Agenda item 137: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

Agenda item 113: Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 (*continued*)

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (*continued*)

Integrated Management Information System (*continued*)

Development Account (*continued*)

* The summary record of the first part of the meeting, held on Thursday, 17 December 1998, appears as document A/C.5/53/SR.45

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98-83754 (E)

Recosting of outstanding statements of programme budget implications and revised estimates

Contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates

First performance report (*continued*)

Draft report of the Fifth Committee

Agenda item 112: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Guidelines for internal control standards (*continued*)

Results-based budgeting (*continued*)

Impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures (*continued*)

Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2000–2001 (*continued*)

Biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee for 1999–2000

Action taken on certain items

Completion of the Committee's work for the main part of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly

The meeting was reconvened at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 17: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(k) Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee (*continued*) (A/53/235; A/C.5/53/1/Add.1 and A/C.5/53/46)

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to two notes by the Secretary-General, one (A/53/235) indicating that Mr. Tadanori Inomata of Japan had resigned from the United Nations Staff Pension Committee, and the other (A/C.5/53/46) indicating that the Japanese Government had nominated Mr. Kenshiro Akimoto to fill the remainder of Mr. Inomata's term of office, which would expire on 31 December 2000. Since there were no other candidates, he took it that the Committee wished to recommend that the General Assembly should appoint Mr. Akimoto as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee until 31 December 2000.

2. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 120: United Nations common system (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.20)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.20

3. **Mr. Ahounou** (Côte d'Ivoire) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.20, entitled "United Nations common system", in the preparation of which both the Secretariat and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had contributed, saying that he appreciated the spirit of compromise which delegations had displayed in the informal consultations.

4. **Mr. Medina** (Morocco) said that, owing to some anomalies that had arisen during the negotiations, it had been agreed that a statement would be read out during the introduction of the draft resolution.

The meeting was suspended at 3.15 p.m. and resumed at 3.20 p.m.

5. **Mr. Ahounou** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that he had not gone into details in his introduction of the draft resolution because he had wished to save time. The statement referred to by the representative of Morocco, which concerned part V of the text, indicated that it was the Fifth Committee's understanding that all activities of ICSC related to human resources management should be programmed in such a manner that the Commission would derive the maximum benefit from such activities.

6. **The Chairman** said that he regretted the misunderstanding that had given rise to the Moroccan delegation's concern, and hoped that such errors would not be repeated in the future.

7. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.20 was adopted.*

Agenda item 135: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.22)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.22

8. **Ms. Powles** (New Zealand), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.22 concerning the funding to be provided in 1999 to the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, said that the level of funding agreed upon in informal consultations was indicated in paragraph 24 of the text. That agreement should not constitute a precedent for the future financing of international tribunals, peacekeeping operations and other budget issues. Paragraph 5 of the text concerned the nature of the review which the Secretary-General was being requested to conduct with regard to the Tribunal. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

9. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.22 was adopted.*

Agenda item 137: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.23)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.23

10. **Ms. Powles** (New Zealand), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.23 concerning the funding to be provided in 1999 to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, drew attention to paragraph 28 which indicated the level of funding to be provided and paragraph 4 which indicated the nature of the review to be conducted by the Secretary-General with regard to the Tribunal. Her comments on draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.22 were equally applicable to draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.23. She hoped that the Committee would adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

11. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) drew attention to a typographical error in paragraph 5.

12. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.23, as orally amended, was adopted.*

13. **Mr. Watanabe** (Japan) said that, despite the importance of their work, the two Tribunals should not be allowed to prepare and implement their budgets any way they pleased. Problems such as high vacancy rates, inflated workload indicators and large unencumbered balances pointed to a lack of accountability in the budget process. Something must be done to ensure the effective management of the two Tribunals; in that connection, he supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions concerning the need to conduct expert reviews of both Tribunals. He hoped that the budget proposals to be submitted by the secretariats of the Tribunals in 1999 would fully reflect the concept of accountability.

14. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that while her delegation had joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.23 in view of the importance of ensuring that the perpetrators of Rwanda's horrific genocide were brought to justice, the text did not fully address her delegation's concerns. For example, paragraph 19 seemed to suggest that all Member States were satisfied with the efforts made thus far to correct problems with the Tribunal's functioning; that was not true in the case of her delegation. Much more must be done in that area, and the Registrar of the Tribunal must fully devote himself to the task of correcting mismanagement and improving efficiency. She hoped that the management review requested in the draft resolution would help to correct such problems.

15. Nothing in the draft resolution should be viewed as an endorsement of any plan to establish separate prosecutors for the two Tribunals, since any such change was within the purview of the Security Council. She was uncomfortable with the compromise decision to transfer seven staff members residing in The Hague from the Tribunal for Rwanda to the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, since they played an invaluable role in ensuring coordination between the Prosecutor, who resided in The Hague, and the Tribunal for Rwanda. Their transfer should in no way be viewed as a means of weakening the Prosecutor's supervisory control over prosecutorial activities in the Tribunal for Rwanda.

Agenda item 113: Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 (*continued*)

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (*continued*) (A/53/734 and Corr.1; A/C.5/53/45)

16. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that the additional information provided by the Secretariat on the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/53/L.66 (A/C.5/53/45) had not addressed the issue which his delegation had raised at a previous meeting, namely, the absence of any justification for the proposed budget increases under various items, the highest of which reached nearly 900 per cent. In future, budget proposals for the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) should be carefully scrutinized and the necessary justification should be provided. In addition, a corrigendum should be issued concerning the errors and omissions in document A/C.5/53/45. However, his delegation would not stand in the way of consensus on the matter.

17. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should draft resolution A/53/L.66 be adopted an additional appropriation of $5,896,200 would be required under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. An additional appropriation of $412,100 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

18. *It was so decided.*

Integrated Management Information System (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.32)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.32

19. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.32 was adopted.*

20. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, in view of the importance of the efficient and effective implementation of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), the European Union had strongly supported the conduct of a forward-looking study of IMIS by independent experts (A/53/662); it agreed with the experts' conclusion that the level of investment in IMIS had been reasonable for what they had described as a well-designed and robust computer application. The successful implementation of IMIS throughout the United Nations system would depend heavily on the availability of adequate funding. Failure to provide enough funding to implement IMIS properly, particularly at offices away from Headquarters, would undermine the very

considerable investment already made in the system. While the European Union had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, it strongly believed that the Committee should revert to the question of funding IMIS as a priority issue.

The meeting was suspended at 3.45 p.m. and resumed at 4.20 p.m.

Development Account (continued) (A/C.5/53/L.34)

Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.34

21. **Mr. Kabir** (Bangladesh), introduced draft decision A/C.5/53/L.34 concerning the development account whereby the General Assembly would decide to defer consideration of the proposals contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on the development account and the related recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the first part of its resumed fifty-third session.

22. *Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.34 was adopted.*

23. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), supported by **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland) and speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of position, recalled that the European Union had from the outset supported the concept of the development account. Such an account should not affect the full implementation of mandated activities and should be sustainable over time. The European Union therefore regretted the inability of some delegations, in particular those from developing countries, to support the Secretary-General's most recent proposals, which had led to the postponement of any substantive decision. Nothing in the procedural decision just adopted, however, undermined the Secretary-General's responsibility for identifying and implementing efficiency measures within the Organization.

24. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reiterated the latter's position that the resources appropriated under section 34 of the programme budget should be used to fund new projects for developing countries which were clearly related to the development priorities set out in the medium-term plan, and that the criteria outlined in the letter dated 11 November from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Second Committee (A/53/664) should guide the formulation of the new projects.

25. The sustainability of the development account should not be pursued through unjustifiable and unsound measures that took no account of the views of the developing countries and the proposed economy measures should not result in a reduction in staffing or in the overall level of the regular budget. Furthermore, adequate resources should be provided for full implementation of mandated programmes and activities.

26. The Group of 77 and China hoped that the item would receive priority attention during the first part of the resumed fifty-third session so that the Committee could adopt a decision that took fully into account the concerns of the developing countries.

27. **Mr. Watanabe** (Japan) expressed regret at the Committee's decision to defer consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals on the development account.

28. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda), joined by **Mr. Saha** (India), **Mr. Zhang Wanhai** (China) and **Mr. Adawa** (Kenya), said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, but was concerned, at the suggestion made by the representative of Austria, speaking on behalf of the European Union, that the developing countries were somehow to blame for the Committee's failure to take a decision on the substance. That suggestion did not accurately reflect what had taken place during the informal consultations on the item.

29. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) expressed disappointment with the Committee's decision to defer consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals. The Secretary-General, however, had the responsibility and authority to implement the mandate given him by the General Assembly to identify and implement efficiency measures and he must continue to pursue that mandate for the benefit of all Member States.

30. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) said that responsibility for the Committee's failure to take a substantive decision on the development account must be shared by all members. The statement just made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union was therefore inappropriate.

31. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) regretted the Committee's decision to defer consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals, particularly since so much time had been spent on negotiations. She agreed with the comments made by the representatives of Uganda and Algeria.

32. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he deeply regretted the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union; it did not accurately reflect the discussions that had taken place on the item.

Recosting of outstanding statements of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/C.5/53/49)

33. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally presenting the report of the Advisory Committee on the recosting of outstanding statements of programme budget implications and revised estimates, said that, as a result of the recosting, overall requirements for relevant sections of the programme budget affected would amount to $195,500. The Committee might wish to note the recosting and to reflect the related adjustments in the revised appropriation for the biennium 1998–1999 to be recommended to the General Assembly.

34. **The Chairman** suggested that the Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on recosting of outstanding statements of programme budget implications and revised estimates and decide that the recosting and related adjustments should be reflected in the revised appropriation for the biennium 1998–1999.

35. *It was so decided.*

Contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/C.5/53/48)

36. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally presenting the report of the Advisory Committee, said that the balance of the contingency fund for the biennium 1998–1999 was $18,754,800. The consolidated amount of $3,447,000 was therefore within the available balance. Should the Committee recommend to the General Assembly the appropriation of the required amounts under the relevant sections of the programme budget, it should also request the General Assembly to note that a balance of $15,307,800 would remain in the contingency fund.

37. **The Chairman** suggested that the Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates, as contained in document A/C.5/53/48, and note that a balance of $15,307,800 would remain in the contingency fund.

38. *It was so decided.*

First performance report (A/C.5/53/L.36)

39. **The Chairman** said that if he heard no objections he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.36 on the first performance report for the biennium 1998–1999 without a vote.

40. *It was so decided.*

Draft report of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/53/L.27)

41. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take a decision on the recommendations contained in paragraph 43 of part IV of the draft report (A/C.5/53/L.27).

Draft resolution I

42. **The Chairman** recalled that all the sections of draft resolution I had been adopted at previous meetings and that some of the language in the narrative part of the draft resolution would have to be adjusted to reflect the actual proceedings of the Committee. In addition, the text of section VII, entitled "Integrated Management Information System project", should be replaced with the text contained in document A/C.5/53/L.32, which reflected the consensus that had been reached during the informal consultations on IMIS.

Draft resolution II

43. *Draft resolution II was adopted.*

Draft decision I

44. **The Chairman** recalled that draft decision I, had been adopted at an earlier meeting.

Draft decision II

45. *Draft decision II, was adopted.*

Draft decision III

46. **The Chairman** pointed out that draft decision A/C.5/53/L.34, which the Committee had adopted earlier in the meeting was reflected in the draft report as draft decision III.

Agenda item 112: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Guidelines for Internal Control Standards (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.30)

Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.30

47. *Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.30 was adopted.*

Results-based budgeting (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.35)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.35

48. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.35 was adopted.*

49. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that her delegation was pleased that the draft resolution would enable the Secretary-General to present certain budget sections in results-based prototype format for the Committee's consideration the following year, and since results-based budgeting was already permitted under existing planning and budgeting rules, the Secretariat could and should implement those rules fully in order to ensure that the Organization's work was achievement-oriented. That approach was consistent with the efforts of many Member States, including the United States, to make their Governments more accountable, productive and responsive to their citizens. Moreover, the Committee for Programme and Coordination, at its most recent session, had recommended changes to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation that would stress "accomplishments" rather than "outputs" in the formulation and implementation of the budget.

50. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) said that his delegation attached great importance to the matter and would be interested in considering the results of the elaboration of the prototypes.

51. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that he looked forward to receiving the reports of the Secretary-General requested in the draft resolution, as well as a comprehensive analytical report of the Advisory Committee, which would enable the Fifth Committee to take a well-considered decision on the issue. He proposed a minor drafting change to paragraph 12 of the draft resolution to make it clear that the Advisory Committee was not being asked to take into account only the report referred to in paragraph 11.

Impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures (continued) (A/C.5/53/L.31)

Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.31

52. *Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.31 was adopted.*

Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2000–2001 (continued) (A/C.5/53/L.33)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.33

53. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that her delegation had been unable to agree to the total preliminary estimate of $2,545 million for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. It would explain its position in the plenary Assembly later that day.

54. **Mr. Watanabe** (Japan) said that his delegation believed that there was room for further streamlining of expenditures through better prioritization and rationalization of programmes and activities. While the preliminary estimate of $2,545 million was unacceptable to his delegation, the latter would not stand in the way of the adoption of the draft resolution without a vote since the budget outline was only one step in the process of preparing a programme budget.

55. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that while the preliminary estimate of $2,545 million for the programme budget outline for the biennium 2000–2001 was not entirely satisfactory to the Group of 77 and China, they had joined the consensus on the preliminary estimate in order to permit the draft resolution to be adopted without a vote.

56. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria) said that the European Union reserved its right to state its position in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

57. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) said that his delegation endorsed the views expressed by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It was his delegation's understanding that the budget outline was merely a preliminary estimate intended to give guidance to the Secretary-General.

58. **Mr. Elmontasser** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) drew attention to an error in paragraph 10 of the Arabic version.

59. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that in paragraph 2, the phrase "for the biennium 2000–2001" should be deleted and that, in the third line of paragraph 10, the word "special" should be inserted before "political".

60. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew attention to a typographical error in the last preambular paragraph and to some editorial corrections needed in paragraph 9.

61. **Mr. Tommo-Monthe** (Cameroon) expressed concern at the decline in the availability of resources to enable the Organization to meet its obligations. He hoped that the Secretary-General would take into account the priorities set in the draft resolution, particularly the priority placed on Africa. The United Nations Information Centres in Africa must no longer be treated as poor relations.

62. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.33, as orally amended, was adopted without a vote.*

63. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) noted that his Government had been forced, because of the international financial crisis, to cut its budget significantly during 1998, and it was therefore not pleased at the increase in the proposed programme

budget outline for the biennium 2000–2001. Although his delegation strongly supported the incorporation of special missions into the regular budget, it had yet to hear any convincing arguments justifying that level of resources. His delegation had nevertheless, joined in the adoption of the draft resolution because it believed that the Organization must be given sufficient resources to fulfil the mandates entrusted to it by Member States.

64. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and would also explain its position in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

65. While her delegation had accepted the small group format for negotiations on the draft resolution because of current circumstances, it believed that in the future all delegations should be present and directly involved in such negotiations.

66. **Mr. Watanabe** (Japan) said that it was the understanding of his delegation that the draft resolution had simply been adopted without a vote, rather than by consensus.

67. **The Chairman** confirmed that understanding.

68. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Russian Federation) said that it was the hope of his delegation that the negotiating climate would improve and that the programme budget for the forthcoming biennium could be adopted by consensus. His delegation believed that in the preparation of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General would be guided by the need to enhance efficiency and savings in order to ensure a zero growth budget without any negative effects on programme activities.

69. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation associated itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Cuba. He drew attention to a typographical error in paragraph 11 of the Arabic text.

Biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee for 1999–2000 (A/C.5/53/L.29)

Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.29

70. *Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.29 was adopted.*

Action taken on certain items (A/C.5/53/L.28)

Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.28

71. *Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.28 was adopted.*

Completion of the Committee's work for the main part of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly

72. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was regrettable that the Committee had been unable to complete its work even though it had resorted to night and weekend meetings. The Group of 77 deeply regretted that the Committee was still confronted by the problems of late documentation and poor content of reports which had prevented it from taking action on some important issues and created the need for resumed sessions.

73. After an exchange of courtesies, in which **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt), **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan), on behalf of the Group of Asian States, **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Russian Federation), on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, **Mr. Lavalle-Valdes** (Guatemala), on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) and **Mr. Saha** (India) took part, **the Chairman** declared that the Fifth Committee had completed its work for the main part of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.